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C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 000626

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SA, SA/INS, IO/SHA, WHA/CCA, DRL/MLA

NSC FOR E. MILLARD

LONDON FOR POL/RIEDEL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04-10-13

TAGS: PREL PGOV PHUM CE CU UNCHR

SUBJECT: Ambassador presses Foreign Minister to support UNCHR resolution re Cuba

Refs: (A) State 91613; (B) State 91349 (All Notal)

(U) Classified by Ambassador E. Ashley Wills.

Reasons: 1.5 (b, d).

¶11. (C) Ambassador Wills spoke to Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Tyronne Fernando this morning (April 10) and urged the GSL to support the resolution re Cuba now before the UNCHR. Fernando remarked that Sri Lanka had traditionally abstained on the Cuba vote. The Ambassador reviewed Ref A talking points, underscoring that the Castro regime's latest activities were especially egregious and that Sri Lanka, as a new member of the UNCHR, could play a key role on this vital human rights matter. Fernando replied that he would consider the issue with his advisers in the next day and then get back in touch with us.

¶12. (C) COMMENT: Our guess is that it will be very tough to move the GSL from an abstention to a "yes" vote. The Sri Lankan MFA is full of NAM-type thinking, which gets in the way of sound policy judgments. That said, the current government has taken a somewhat better tack re international organization matters, so it is very much worth a try. In addition to the meeting with Ambassador Subasinghe, we suggest that Department raise this matter with Minister Milinda Moragoda, who will be in Washington for the April 14 seminar on Sri Lanka.  
END COMMENT.

¶13. (U) Minimize considered.

WILLS